

THE BEREAN CHRISTADELPHIAN ECCLESIAL NEWS

A monthly magazine devoted wholly to the Berean Christadelphian Ecclesial welfare, with the object of providing Ecclesial news, exhortations, articles and information of fraternal interest to the Brotherhood. Defending the original, foundation principles upon which the Truth was uncovered from darkness and upon which the Christadelphian movement was developed. Opposed to the dogmas of papal and protestant christendom. Upholding the Truth as The Berean Christadelphians since 1923.

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God Willing, The Berean Christadelphian Ecclesial News will be published monthly as an avenue of providing information of Ecclesial interest to the Brotherhood. Ecclesial news and correspondence, Fraternal Gathering notices, special activities and upbuilding exhortations are encouraged. This is an effort to upbuild and prepare us in heart and mind for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

Ecclesial News

NAKALIRA, Kenya, Sunday school 9.30 A.M. Memorial 10.30 am Bible students evenings Friday Bible class 2.30 P.M., Brother Paul Walukana P.O. Box 65-50216 Kamukuywa Kenya.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters,

Loving greetings from Nakalira Ecclesia,

Once again we are pleased to share with you our activities and efforts. During the past year in October, we enjoyed the sweet fellowship of those like precious faith at the visit of Brother Bob Bent (Dallas Ecc.). During this time on 13th Feb 2011.

On 13th Feb 2011, we had enjoyed the company and fellowship of brother and sister David and Dawn (Richard Ecc.) Brother Bob Bent (Dallas Ecc.) Sister Kaye Yuen (Vancouver Ecc.) Sis. Mary Agnes, Bro. and Sis. David and Agnes Gatua (Nairobi Ecc.) Bro Epa, Bro and Sis. Stephen and Everlyn and Bro. David Mukora, Kimukungi Ecc. Bro. and Sis. Rodgers and Caro Musebe (Kimilili Ecc.) Bro. and Sis. William and Florence, Bro. and Sis. Moses and Mary, Bro. Dennis Wanyonyi and Sis. Bridgid Juma (Sabata Ecc).

Before Memorial Bro. Bob had a lesson with Sunday school scholars. Bro. David Humphreys had a talk on the Holy Spirit to the Brothers and Sisters. Memorial service was presided by Bro. Bob.

The right hand of fellowship was extended to those new baptized Bro. David Gatua, Sis. Agnes Gatua and Sis, Hellen Wanyonyi. We hope that their addition in the house hold will be strengthening and encouraging for us all. A word of exhortation was from Bro. Epa. Also on 14 Feb, 2011, we thank the visiting team who spent enough time with us, visited homes of brothers and sisters seeing the BCAF water project. After that we had Bible readings together and short comments. After lunch we had two sessions.

1. The Brothers and Sisters had a talk and exhortation for fellowship from Bro. Bob.

2. For Bible students Bro. John Simiyu lead the discussions on first principles. The meeting was joyful, we are thankful to our Father. May God bless them and watch over them, till we meet again in Kenya or in the Kingdom of God in Jerusalem. If the Lord will extend our days, the Bible schools will be held at Nakalira February, 2012. Work continues to those seeking the Truth.

With the Love from Nakalira Ecclesia, Bro. Paul Walukana.

GOLDTHWAITE, Texas

With great joy the Goldthwaite ecclesia would like to announce the baptism of **Brother Jesse Gustavsson** on Saturday, March 5, 2011. He received the right hand of fellowship on May 6 at the Goldthwaite ecclesia.

Brother Jesse can be reached at jessegustavsson@hotmail.com. His phone number is 325-451-7940. Letters can be sent to: 1510 Fourth St., Goldthwaite, TX 76844

Love in Christ, Bro. Curtis Hurst

HENGOED, Wales, United Kingdom, Breaking of Bread – 10.45A.M., Sunday School – 12.45P.M., Lecture – 2.30P.M., Bible Class and Elpis Israel Class – held alternately in the homes of the brethren and sisters, Children’s Evening – held every 2 weeks on Friday at the home of Sister Alison Hopper at 6.30P.M.

Beloved Brethren and Sisters in the bonds of the Abrahamic Covenant,

We are delighted to record some additions to our ecclesia. On 13th March 2011, we received into fellowship Bro. Ewan McLeod and Sister Elisabeth McLeod. They both belonged to another group, but had for some time been considering the Doctrine of Fellowship and Withdrawal. After careful and prayerful consideration they became convinced that it was essential to withdraw from error. It was an extremely painful decision for them, but one which they courageously took. The interview we had with them indicated that we were of one mind and Bro. Robert Bennett was pleased to be able to extend the right hand of Fellowship to them on behalf of the Hengoed ecclesia and the Berean Fellowship as a whole. It was a most encouraging Sunday morning for us all in these last hours of the Gentile night. Bro. Matthew Hughes provided a sobering exhortation for us all reminding us of our need to go on unto perfection and to keep our spiritual vision clear. We also have 2 additions to the Sunday School! The day was one of great joy and gladness, ending in hymn singing at the home of Brother Phillip and Sis. Cheryl. We pray that Yahweh will bless our new brother and sister as they walk with us to the Kingdom. (Bro. and Sis. McLeod’s address is 11, Bury Hill View, Downend, Bristol, BS16 6PA UK).

Since our last ecclesial news we have also had the company of Sis. Rachel Johnatty-Theaker, Sis. Sharon Small (of the Brisbane ecclesia) and Bro. Stephen and Sis. Vivien Ford. Their company has been most encouraging as we wait the Master’s Return, and we were very sorry that Sis. Rachel has now moved to Australia. We will miss the company of her and her family, and we hope that all goes well with them in their new country.

As we all are probably aware, the year 2001 is the 400th Anniversary of the King James Bible. The ecclesia has, therefore, been busy constructing an exhibition comprising of facsimiles of old Bibles and archaeological artifacts. It has been an encouragement to us all as each brother and sister has done their part to design and build the exhibition, research the information needed to support the exhibits, and be present when open to the public. We are hoping to set it up in different locations with newspaper adverts, leaflet distributions and banner advertisements. We must surely be very close to the Master’s Return. The door of salvation is about to close, and the opportunity for salvation will then come to an end as the fearful judgements of Almighty God will begin to be poured out upon the nations. We hope and pray that some may avail themselves of the water of life before it is too late. The political, geological, economical and moral conditions may well be giving the inhabitants of the world a last opportunity to consider Him who not only rules in the Kingdom of Men, but who controls the elements that can smash man’s plans in a moment of time. Let us prepare ourselves with Godly fear.

With love in Elpis Israel and on behalf of the brethren and sisters of the Hengoed Ecclesia, Bro. Phillip Hughes

SYDNEY, NSW, Australia

Loving greetings to everyone,

We recently moved from Berkshire, UK to Sydney, Australia and wanted to pass on our new contact details.

201/24 Karrabee Avenue, Huntley's Cove, NSW 2111, Australia. Tel: +61 (0)2 9879 7761 (Email addresses stay the same; rjohnatty@yahoo.com).

Do please make a note of this newest geographical dot on the Berean Christadelphian global landscape. Although we know that Australia isn't at the top of many people's travel agendas, please be assured of a warm welcome and a place to stay should you ever venture this way.

With Love in the Bonds of the Truth, Sis. Rachel Johnatty-Theaker

HOUSTON, Texas

Greetings all in Yahweh's Vineyard.

HOUSTON BEREAN GATHERING, April 23 & 24, 2011

PLACE: Lake Houston State Park, New Caney, TX

For those who wish to arrive on Friday evening (April 22), the Lodges are available Friday evening through Sunday noon. They are dormitory style. Just let us know if you want accommodations at the lodges.

The classes will begin at 11:30A.M. on Saturday. Fellowship will begin at 9:00A.M., Sunday. Please join us for refreshments if you can. All meals are provided, and there is no cost for the Gathering. Upon arrival you must sign in at the Park Office, just let them know that you are attending the Berean Gathering.

Sis. Cheryl Lorquet is the accommodations coordinator again this year.

If you need any information concerning rooms, please contact Sis. Cheryl at lorquet@sbcglobal.net . Bro. David Lauck is the Gathering coordinator, so if you need any general information, please contact him at dblauck@myexcel.com.

We look forward to an uplifting time of fellowship with you all.

Bro. David Lauck

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

HOUSTON FRATERNAL GATHERING.....April 23–24, 2011

Bro. David Lauck, dblauck@myexcel.com.

LAMPASAS FRATERNAL GATHERING.....June 10–12, 2011

Bro. Ricky Hurst, PO Box 1381, Goldthwaite TX 1-325-451-4075

RICHARD FRATERNAL GATHERING.....July 1 – July 4, 2011

Sis. Christine Jones, RR# 1, Richard, Sask, S0M 2P0, Canada,
sc.jones@sasktel.net

HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING..... July 25–31, 2011

Holy Land Trip

Our plans are continuing for another trip to the Holy Land in May, 2011, God willing. We expect more people than we had on our first trip and should have prices firmed up in a couple of months. Instead of going down into Egypt we hope to visit a few places that Paul travelled to: Athens, Corinth and Cenchrea before departing for home.

You may see the complete itinerary at the Richard web site (richardbereans.com). We look forward to the day when we will all assemble at Jerusalem to enjoy that marriage feast prepared for those that are accounted worthy. What a glorious hope we can look forward to. Please contact Bro. Jim Sommerville for further information.

The BCAA

The Berean Christadelphian Audio Archives, or BCAA for short, has made available a large selection of talks on MP3 online. The address is www.bcaudioarchives.blogspot.com. Please check this link as we will be updating with new material as much as possible.

The purpose of this site is to restore and make available lectures, exhortations, and study classes. Some of these talks are decades old and have seldom been heard.

We are always looking for tapes, and if you have some talks that you would like to share, please email either Bro. Craig Kiley (craigkiley@yahoo.com) or Bro. Noah Brown (sbsugar@gmail.com) and we will be happy to transfer the talks to mp3 format and post them.

In the Image of God Made He Him-1

"With him (Moses) will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches, and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold"

—Numbers 12:8

THE TRUTH FULLY DISCOVERED

IT is our conception and conviction that the Truth in all its essential elements was formulated from Scripture by Brethren Thomas and Roberts. We regard the matter of the scripturally-revealed Person of the Father as one of these elements. We do not regard these brethren as inspired authorities, but we do consider them faithful and dependable expounders of basic scriptural truth.

Christadelphians have for 100 years embraced what they believe to be the "Faith once delivered to the saints." Regarding the element of scriptural truth as to what is revealed concerning the personal form of the Father, it is

our conviction from Scripture that the Christadelphian belief—as in all other basic points—is sound and true.

The suggestion that God has no form, or that His form, if any, is different from that manifested in the angels, and man, and the present glorious eternal spirit body of Jesus, and that the simple record of man's creation in the image of God must be interpreted symbolically—these views are not new in the world but have been fully considered in Christadelphian literature and study in the past, and have been rejected as error.

In the words of bro. Roberts (Chdn. 1896, p. 348), “Our mind is that the Truth has been found in its original simplicity and purity and completeness, and that the only enlightened business in hand is to preach and contend for and apply this.”

THE TEACHING OF BRETHREN THOMAS AND ROBERTS

WE shall first show what Bre. Thomas and Roberts and the whole Christadelphian body from their day to the present have believed to be the scriptural truth on this matter—one of the foundation truths upon which the whole structure of revelation and the ultimate purpose of God is founded. These references are abbreviated. The intention is not to give the reasoning in full (which can be looked up), but to briefly illustrate the consistent conviction throughout.

Then we shall show, by a few quotations from the “orthodox” writers of Christendom, that the idea that God has no form is one of their doctrines by which they oppose the scriptural truth of **bodily** salvation—the redemption of the **body**.

Then we shall give what we consider to be positive scriptural proof that the Christadelphian viewpoint on the matter is the true one, followed by a consideration of the passages put forward to prove differently.

QUOTATIONS FROM THE TRUTH'S STANDARD WORKS

Elpis Israel, p. 38-9: “The import of the phrase 'in the image, after the likeness' is suggested by the testimony that 'Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image, and called his name Seth.' In this respect, Seth stands related to Adam, as Adam did to the Elohim ... Would anyone be at a loss to know the meaning of Seth's being in the image of his father? The very same thing is meant by Adam being in the image of the Elohim ... The resemblance therefore of Adam to the Elohim as their image was of bodily form ... In shape, Seth was like Adam, Adam like the Elohim, and the

Elohim the image of the invisible Increate, the great and glorious Archetype of the intelligent universe.”

* * *

Eureka, vol. I, p. 95-6: “Incorruptible and living substance, then, is the Body of the Deity; and as the glorified Jesus is the 'Image of the Invisible Theos,' He must have 'parts' ... He has form and parts, as well as body, and is the great Archetype, or divine Original, after which all the Elohim, or immortal intelligences, of His universe are modeled and made ...

“Now these suggestions are sustained by 'the likeness of the glory of Jehovah' which appeared to Ezekiel. 'Above the firmament,' says this prophet, 'that was over the heads of the four living ones, was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it ... This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Yahweh'—ch. 1:26-8.”

* * *

Phanerosis, p. 28-9: “Paul says in Heb. 1:2-3 that the Son is the 'charakter' (Greek meaning 'graving') of His 'hypostasis' (substance) ... Seth was the image of Adam, and Adam the image of the Elohim (Gen. 1:26; 5:3) ... Adam the First was image of Elohim, and this was in relation to bodily form ... Body and form were the hypostasis (substance) of Adam and Seth ... Where 'image (charakter—graving) is predicated of hypostasis' (substance), that hypostasis must have both body and form. The Father-Spirit ... is a bodily form.”

* * *

Ways of Providence, p. 12-16: “Man is stated by James to be 'made after the similitude of God,' even the Father—see context (James 3:9). Paul also says he is 'the image and glory of God' (1 Cor. 11:7). Christ, formed in fashion as a man, is said to be 'the image of God' (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15); and 'the express image of His person' (Heb. 1:3); which gives force to Jehovah's description of him as 'the man that is My fellow' (Zech. 13:7).

“From this results the conviction that the Father is not only glorious substance, even spirit substance, but that this substance has the human form in its perfection. The Father's person is, in fact, the prototype of all intelligent being. Of Moses it was said, as indicative of the privilege which he alone enjoyed in his day, 'the similitude of the Lord shall he behold' (Num. 12:8). That this referred to the angelic manifestation of Jehovah is

unquestionable, but still the fact remains that the similitude he beheld was the similitude of Jehovah.

“The God revealed to us in the Bible is a Creator, a Father, and a Person; universal in His presence and power, but still a located and glorious Person ... Our simple duty is to accept implicitly what is revealed ... The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is a personal Father, yet not a man, though we faintly borrow our image from Him.”

* * *

Bible Finger Posts, old #29, new #19 (Written by bro. Roberts, still distributed): “Concerning the Eternal Father, the teaching of the Scriptures is very clear ... That He is light and life incorporate in glorious form and substance, even the form which the human form faintly reflects.”

* * *

Instructor, p. 10: “The Bible reveals that man is a living soul or creature, originally made of the dust of the ground, in the image of God.”

* * *

Visible Hand of God, p. 18: “He (man) is the similitude of the divine form ... a special and noble creature formed for the glory of God.”

* * *

Christadelphian Answers, p. 1: “The doctrine that God is 'without body or parts' is utterly opposed to what is told us in the Scriptures of Truth, from which we learn that He is of human form—Exo. 33:23, Heb. 1:3, Jam. 3:9).”

* * *

Christendom Astray, p. 118: “The Scriptures plainly teach that the Father is a tangible person ... We will not say that the Being with Whom he (Moses) had this intercourse was actually THE ETERNAL ONE, because it is evident from what Stephen and Paul teach that it was an angelic manifestation ... Yet it is affirmed that to Moses it was a similitude of Jehovah (Num. 12:8). It was therefore a manifestation of the Deity.”

* * *

Christadelphian Treasury, p. 4: “We learn from the Bible that the Deity it reveals has both body and parts.”

* * *

Christadelphian 1889, p. 104: “We cannot pretend to measure God or even adequately compare Him to any mere human standard. The glory of the incorruptible so far transcends the glory of the corruptible that it is

impossible to institute anything beyond the very faintest comparison (Rom. 1:23, Isa. 40:18). Still there are some comparisons that are directly expressed in the Scriptures, and some others that are involved.

“First, with regard to the numberless variety of creatures that God made, it is said of man alone that he was made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-7; 5:1; 9-6). This is confirmed by what is again recorded in the New Testament (1 Cor. 11:7; Acts 17:28-9).

“Made like the angels at first with respect to form and faculty (but for the present 'a little lower' than they with regard to nature and function), we are destined at the last—subject to Christ's approval—to become their equals in nature, life, function, power and glory. Like the 'third heaven,' it is the stage in the process of ascension from the earthy to the heavenly, and from the natural to the spiritual (1 Cor. 15:46-9).

“First, being 'born of flesh' (John 3:6), we are descendants of him of whom it is recorded that he 'was the Son of God' (Luke 3:38), and for which reason, as Paul says, 'We are also His offspring.' In this we have the raw material of God's purpose—**God's image in living clay.**

“Next to this, in being 'born of water' we become sons of God upon the still higher principle of being born again of the incorruptible seed, or the word of the kingdom of God sown in the heart (1 Pet. 2:23, Matt. 13:19). It is of this result that John says, 'Now are we the sons of God.'

“This in due time (in the case of the faithful) will be followed by what Christ calls being 'born of the Spirit' (John 3:5-7) ... a man thenceforward 'is Spirit' ... he has entered upon the last degree of qualification that introduces a man to eternal incorporation into the perfected immortal family of God (Rev. 21:7; Luke 20:36) ... Christ is both the example and the guarantee of its final attainment ... This accomplished, the likeness of the 'children of light' to the 'Father of Lights' may be accounted complete.

“When the pure in heart see God (Matt. 5-8; Heb. 12:14), they will not look upon a mere shapeless concretion of power or aggregation of nature's forces, but upon the glorious, personal Archetype of the universe, of whose person Christ is already the 'express image,' the very impress of His substance, and the effulgence of His glory (Heb. 1:3, Revised Version).”

* * *

Christadelphian 1892, p. 132: “God has form, and His form is the human form ... we need not go nearer than this.”

* * *

Christadelphian 1892, p. 169: “The Divine form—the form of man, who is 'made after the similitude of God,' even the Father (James 3:9). This is the form of the angels, who are also spoken of as 'the sons of God' (Job 38:7). Their designation as sons would point to a Father-form, even He Who 'dwells in light' ... With this in view, we can join in David's word with fullness of meaning: 'To Thee lift I mine eyes, O Thou that dwellest in the heavens'; and in the prayer that the Lord taught his disciples, 'Our Father Who art in heaven'.”

* * *

Christadelphian 1892, p. 263-4: “He is the Eternal, Increate, Inevitable Archetype after which He molded the corporeal form of all His children ... It is not a matter upon which to speculate, for to do so is both irreverent and presumptuous ... We can approach no nearer than the Spirit has permitted in Exo. 24:10-1; 33:18-23; 1 Tim. 6:15-6, and the various symbols of His glory...

“In discountenancing any speculative inquiry into the character of His Form, of His Person, of His Substantial Being, I do most heartily agree ... It is not a matter to be dealt with lightly or too familiarly; but with awe, reverence, and a worshipful silence, as becometh His children, begotten in the anointed Jesus, who is or bears His express image.”

THE FALSE VIEWS OF CHRISTENDOM BASED UPON THE IMMORTAL SOUL

Adam Clarke Commentary, vol. 1, p. 38: “Gen. 1:26 — What is said here refers to his soul—this was made in the image of God ... God was now producing a spirit; it was created after the image of God, and that image, Saint Paul tells us, consisted in righteousness, true holiness and knowledge, Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10.”

* * *

Interntl. Bible Ency., p. 1264: “It lies in the nature of the case that the 'image' does not consist in bodily form; it can only reside in spiritual qualities.”

* * *

Westminster Dict. of the Bible, p. 10: “He (Adam) was made in the image of God. Paul describes the similarity as consisting in knowledge, righteousness and true holiness.”

* * *

JFB Commentary, vol. I, p. 8: “In what did this image consist? Not in the erect form of man ... but in the moral dispositions of his soul, commonly called original righteousness.”

The above quotations illustrate the general way in which these verses are interpreted by Christendom. Some however—recognizing, and more honestly facing, the force of the words in the original—seek a way of fitting them in with the orthodox conception of God and the soul, as follows—

Companion Bible, p. 4: “Refers only to outward form, not to attributes. ‘Our image,’ that is, of Elohim, the Second Person, who had taken the creature form in order to create.”

* * *

Abington Commentary, p. 221: “A further hint of a lower theological position has been seen by some in the repeated phrase ‘in our image,’ which is thought to point to a time when men believed that God had a material frame like that which man possesses.”

THE LITERAL FOUNDATION OF SCRIPTURE

THERE is undoubtedly much more to the general subject of the ‘image of God’ than just bodily form. The whole Bible is built on this plan—

“First that which is natural, afterwards that which is spiritual.”

The solid literal foundation in each case is firmly laid, and then the beauties of type, lesson or symbol are developed from it. But Christendom sweeps away the literal basis entirely and gives everything a “spiritual” interpretation.

There is much in the Bible about Israel, Jerusalem, temple, city, etc., that is figurative and spiritual. Christendom uses this to break down the literal foundation upon which these spiritual truths are built. To them, there is nothing literal in all the promises about Israel, Jerusalem, the land, etc. All, however obviously factual and literal, must be “spiritualized.”

The word “body” is another excellent example of this treatment. Unquestionably there is much secondary or figurative use of this word, but it is all based on the solid literal foundation. When we read that he “*shall change our vile body (soma) that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body (soma)*” we know that it is strictly literal—the basic foundation of our hope of eternal life through glorification of the literal body.

And when we read “*For the edifying of the body (soma) of Christ,*” and “*We are members of his body (soma),*” while we fully understand this does

not mean a literal physical body, still we do not feel compelled to set the one against the other and conclude that the literal meaning must be false.

The real, simple, literal framework of the Bible is our anchor. Certain statements are demonstrably literal. We need all of the literal scriptural foundation to combat the immaterial soul theories of Christendom, which merely brushes aside all literal statements that do not fit its views.

ACCEPTING JUST WHAT GOD HAS SAID

WHAT then is the literal foundation that we are given concerning man being made in the image of God? It is not a matter of what we think it should mean, or of developing an idea that we feel to be “conceivable.” ANY conception of God is “inconceivable.”

It is just as difficult, yea, more difficult, to conceive of Him without a body than with one—just as difficult and more so to conceive of Him with any other form than one like our Own.

It is just as impossible for us to adequately conceive of space as endless as it is to think of it with an end (for what is beyond?). Our minds are not constructed to grasp these things, and to speculate is folly.

We must—as carefully as we can—try to determine **just what God has told us**, and hold firmly to that. That is our salvation. Exactly what He has told us—thereby we may, in His mercy, save ourselves from the pitfalls that have befallen all who have permitted their minds to speculate and wander from the narrow beam of directly revealed truth.

When we have established the **literal foundation**, and fixed it immovably in our minds, then we can profitably examine the secondary meanings and lessons that are developed from it in Scripture.

As regards the soul, hell, death, satan, Israel, Jerusalem, temple, land, city, heaven, earth, etc., the Old Testament lays the solid foundation of literal reality. Upon this established reality the New Testament builds. Christendom throws the Old away—the book of definitions—and is therefore free to make what it likes of the New.

TSELEM

THE word “*image*” in question in Gen. 1:26-7 is *tselem* in the original Hebrew. This word occurs 34 times. Of these 34 occurrences—

In 4 places, it is used in connection with the making of man in God's image—Gen. 1:26, 27; 9:6.

In 27 places, it is obvious and inescapable from the direct context that the meaning is actual, literal form, shape and appearance.

In the 3 remaining places, the meaning is not fixed by the context. (One of these 3 concerns Seth being in the “image” of Adam—we believe the simple, natural meaning is obvious but not absolutely conclusive.)

The following are all the occurrences of this word *tselem*—

The four references to the 'image of God'—

Gen. 1:26—*“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”*

Gen. 1:27 (twice)—*“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him.”*

Gen. 9:6—*“For in the image of God made he man.”*

The 27 times where the meaning is clear and unmistakable —

Num. 33:52—*“Destroy all their molten images.”*

1 Sam. 6:5 (twice)—*“Ye shall make images of your emerods and images of your mice.”*

1 Sam. 6:11—*“The images of their emerods.”*

2 Kings 11:18—*“And his images broke they in pieces.”*

2 Chron. 23:17—*“And brake his images in pieces.”*

Eze. 7:20—*“They made the images of their abominations and their detestable things.”*

Eze. 16:17—*“Madest to thyself images of men.”*

Eze. 23:14—*“Images of the Chaldeans portrayed with vermilion.”*

Amos 5:26—*“Moloch and Chiun your images.”*

Daniel, chaps. 2 & 3—Sixteen occurrences 'the great image,' 'the image's head,' 'smote the image upon his feet,' 'an image of gold,' 'the golden image.'

Dan. 3:19—*“And the form (tselem) of his visage was changed”* —the visible appearance.

The 3 remaining times where the meaning is not definitely fixed by the context —

Gen. 5:3—*“Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image.”*

Psa. 39:6—*“Man walketh in a vain show (tselem).”* Some translate this, *“Although every man walketh in the image (of God), yet . . .”*

Psa. 73:20—*“O Lord, when Thou wakest, Thou shalt despise their image.”*

This last is illustrated by many passages, such as these:

Isa. 41:23 (God speaking to the idols) – *“Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods ... Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought. An abomination is he that chooseth you.”*

Jer. 2:28 – *“Where are the gods that thou hast made thee? Let them arise, if they can save thee.”*

Eze. 6:4-7 – *“Your images shall be broken ... and ye shall know that I am the Lord.”*

So we see that in 27 cases 'tselem' conclusively means a literal, visible, outward form, and in the remaining three cases where the meaning cannot be proven from the context, this same meaning is the simplest and most reasonable one to infer.

In every place where the meaning of this word tselem is fixed by the context, it inescapably refers to literal form.

SO WHEN GOD USES THIS WORD AND SAYS THAT MAN IS MADE IN HIS IMAGE, WE BELIEVE THERE CANNOT BE ANY DOUBT AS TO WHAT HE MEANS US TO UNDERSTAND BY IT.

To suggest that this word as used here means something entirely different from its real meaning and the way it is used everywhere else is surely unreasonable and wrong, and would open a way whereby all the literal framework of the Bible could be nullified.

For any who will treat the Scriptures fairly and without previous bias, really seeking the meaning intended, Gen. 1:26 can convey but one simple, clear meaning.

Free from theological speculation about immortal souls and the body not being the real man, this is the conclusion all sound brethren have come to in the past as they have read this revelation from God.

WHOLE SUBSEQUENT PICTURE CONFIRMS THIS

THE whole subsequent picture as given in the Scriptures clearly confirms and agrees with this fitting and beautiful and inspiring and ennobling literal foundation of our kinship with the Father—*“In the image of God created He man.”*

This is necessitated by the revealed fact that—for those who are faithful—**this mortal body is to be changed to glorious eternal spirit**

substance “*even like unto Christ's glorious body*” which is so described after his resurrection. (Christendom has lost this anchor of reality—bodies are quite incidental to their creed.)

Jesus Christ—a **glorious spiritual body**—now sits at the right hand of God, his Father.

To that divine family we hope to be eternally joined, each with his body changed to glorious, incorruptible spirit substance, sons of our Father in heaven.

This conception of God as the Father and glorious Archetype of all His children is woven throughout the Bible. It lies at the root of, and gives meaning to, all the “manifestations of God” right down to that greatest and fullest manifestation—“a Son.”

TEMUNAH

IN Num. 12:8 God says—

*“With him (Moses) will I speak mouth to mouth . . . and the **similitude** of the Lord (Heb: Yahweh) shall he behold.”*

This word “*similitude*” is *temunah* and is exactly the same word as used in Deut. 4:12, “*Ye heard the voice . . . but SAW no **similitude**.*” (This latter verse has been used in the arguments for the views we are combating.)

This word occurs ten times in all, as follows:—

Num. 12:8—“*The **similitude** of the Lord (Yahweh) shall he behold.*”

Exod. 20:4—“*Thou shalt not make any graven image or any **likeness** of anything.*”

Deut. 4:15—“*Ye saw no manner of **similitude**.*”

Deut. 4:16—“*The **similitude** of any figure, the likeness of male or female.*”

Deut. 4:23—“*Graven image, or the **likeness** of any thing*” (Same in verse 25).

Deut. 5:8—“*Graven image, or the **likeness** of any thing.*”

Job 4:16—“*An **image** was before mine eyes.*”

Psa. 17:15—“*I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy **likeness***” (RV: ‘with beholding Thy form.’)

It will be observed that in every occurrence but the first and the last, the context leaves no possible doubt that actual, outward, visible form or shape

is meant. Eight times out of ten the context positively fixes the meaning. On what possible ground can it be claimed that in the other two places (Num. 12:8 and Psa. 17:15) where the similitude of God is referred to, we have any license to give it a different meaning? To arbitrarily say that *temunah* does not mean visible form in these two places in question, when it undeniably does everywhere else, is utterly unreasonable.

How can God teach us anything, if we are going to treat words like this? Here again He is using a word to teach us something about Himself, and in every other place in Scripture where He uses that word He so arranges the context as to make the meaning inescapable—literal form. He says of Moses, “*The similitude of Yahweh shall he BEHOLD,*” and a fulfillment of this promise is described in detail in language that can leave no doubt as to its literal meaning—Exo. 33:20-23.

ALL REVELATIONS OF GOD POINT JUST ONE WAY

ALL that is revealed on this subject tends in one direction. All the 'similitudes of Yahweh' that have been manifested have been of just one form. Surely God is leading our minds to but one conception. Bearing in mind the clear meaning of Gen. 1:26, this consistent presentation all through Scripture is irresistible in its import.

As bro. Thomas points out (Eureka I, p.95-6), “The appearance of the likeness of the glory of Yahweh” (Eze. 1:28) which was “the likeness as the appearance of a MAN” (v.26) is another link in this chain of the manifestation of the similitude of Yahweh.

And what else can we reasonably make of Exo. 33:20-23—

*“And He (Yahweh, v.17) said, **Thou canst not see My Face,** for there shall not man see Me and live . . . **thou shalt see My back parts:** but My face shall not be seen.”*

Surely no words could be plainer or more specific than this, if we will accept them in their simple meaning. Again we have Exo. 24:10-11—

*“And they saw **the God of Israel** and there was under **His feet** as it were a paved work of sapphire stone.”*

All this fits perfectly on the foundation of Gen. 1:26-7 that God patterned His children after His own form; which form—in the faithful—will be perpetuated in the incorruptible spirit nature like to the glorious body of Jesus Christ.

We do not desire to analyze or speculate upon these statements. We do not know how or to what degree either Moses or the elders or Israel or
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Ezekiel saw God. We do not believe it is a profitable subject for analysis or speculation.

We simply desire to extract from these passages the **one basic revelation in them**—the simple confirmation they give us concerning the revealed form of God. God has chosen, in His wisdom in laying the foundation of our knowledge, to reveal this. If He had not, it would be utter presumption to discuss it or theorize upon it. But He has been graciously pleased to make certain revelations, and this point we are considering is part of the **knowledge concerning Himself and ourselves** that He desires us to receive and live by—

“Your BODY is the temple of the Holy Spirit”

Ye are shaped for a noble and exalted destiny—as glorious SONS of God!

This revealed truth helps to guard us against the nebulous vaporizings of trinitarianism and immortal-soulism. It is just the opposite from what the wisdom of the world has decided that God should and must be. For the pitifully limited natural human mind to formulate conceptions of what is or is not “fitting” as regards the Nature and Person of God is the sheerest folly. Wisdom will simply accept what God has revealed.

1 COR. 11:7 and JAMES 3:9

1 Cor. 11:7—*“Man is the image and glory of God.”*

James 3:9—*“Men, which are made after the similitude of God.”*

These both clearly refer to Gen. 1:26-7, and speak of a natural condition applying to all men indiscriminately. It is clear from the first reference that it is something the man alone has in the primary sense and NOT THE WOMAN.

To say that it means “spiritual discernment” is obviously unsound because Paul and James speak of it as something still applying to all men in their day. And by this line of argument, 1 Cor. 11:7 would indicate that sisters had no spiritual discernment.

To say that it means “dominion” is very strained, for both Genesis and James describe mankind as “created,” “made,” in the image of God, clearly referring to some inherent factor of the actual thing made, part of the actual making or forming, and not something externally bestowed upon him, as

dominion. This “dominion” interpretation also, of course, ignores the meaning of image in Gen. 1:26 as we have shown it to be.

THE SPIRITUAL CONFIRMS THE LITERAL

Truly, in the New Testament, the “image of God” is also used in a much higher sense than external form, but rather than destroying the simple literal foundation, the spiritual application is BUILT UPON and confirms it.

We do not find ANYWHERE in Scripture that spiritual lessons and applications disprove the actual, literal facts they are patterned from.

Passages using this expression or thought in a spiritual sense are:

2 Cor. 3:18—*“We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory”* (Amer. Rev. Vers.: “. . . are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another.”)

Col. 3:10—*“Put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of Him that created him.”*

Eph. 4:24 (Amer. Rev. Vers.)—*“Put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”*

It will be clearly seen that the “image of God” in these passages is a likeness to Him in mind and character. This is a legitimate and scripturally supported spiritual application, patterned on the natural, as many spiritual teachings are. It is quite clear and understandable and—while based upon the literal meaning—there is no confusion or conflict with it.

CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN LITERAL AND SPIRITUAL

THERE is plainly a vast difference between the simple, literal “image of God” in which man was made at the beginning and all men have been made in since, and the image referred to in these passages which is a matter of developed character, tried faith, growing in knowledge, obedience learned through things suffered, spiritual transformation of the mind, etc.

The **natural** image is bestowed upon ALL from creation forward; the **spiritual** image is a matter of lifelong effort and gradual attainment. THE SCRIPTURES DO NOT CONFUSE THE TWO.

James 3:9 could not possibly be referring to the same thing as 2 Cor. 3:18. The first is natural, involuntary and universal; the second is spiritual, voluntary and individual. The first is applied to all men; the second only to the faithful believers.

It is essential to PERCEIVE THIS DISTINCTION, and not mix these references together.

It is the meaning of the former—the natural, universal image—with which we are concerned. This meaning we believe we have conclusively demonstrated by a thorough examination of what the original words used by God really mean, and the way they are consistently used to fix that meaning beyond question. Also by other Old Testament foundation references to the subject of the form of God.

The abandonment of this essential truth will soon lead to a broad disintegration of the scriptural picture concerning the spiritual body, and a long step toward the bodiless, immaterial, immortal soul conception.

The Scriptures nowhere give any support to the theory that the image of God in which man was—and still is—made is “dominion” or “spiritual discernment that Adam had but Eve hadn't,” etc. Nothing of this kind is included in the simple, natural meaning of the words used. These are groundless and unsupported suppositions, the fallacy of which should be obvious by the fact that such a wide range of meanings must be given a simple term in order to make it fit all references.

HEBREWS 1:3

Heb. 1:3—*“His Son ... the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Person.”*

This is the AV, and it seems to represent the meaning of the original words as accurately as any, unless “substance” (RV) is a closer rendering than “person.” We believe this verse to be a strong support of the truth concerning the form of God. It appeals to us in that way, but we do not insist upon this exact meaning here, because it is not absolutely literally conclusive.

The “express image” is in the Greek charakter, literally “engraving,” and, as bro. Thomas points out in Phanerosis, the engraving of a substance points strongly to a form, specially when it is tied in with such a visual aspect as “the brightness of His glory.”

However, as bro. Roberts mentions (Chdn. 1892), the case does not rest on this verse. To those who feel the force of the other testimony, this reference adds strength, but they would not use this verse exclusively as a primary proof.

COLOSSIANS 1:15

Col. 1:15—*“His Son . . . who is the image of the invisible God.”*

The specific introduction of the word “invisible” surely directs our minds to the aspect of sight and appearance. This seems inescapable. To us, therefore, this verse is another clear link in the chain. The word “image” itself here is not conclusive, for the Greek word (eikon) is used both literally and figuratively in the New Testament, though more often in the primary sense of an actual, visible similitude.

(To be continued, God willing next month.)

—Bro. G.V. Growcott

In Sinai the Holy

“O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years; in wrath remember mercy”—Hab. 3:2.

The nucleus of the RAINBOWED UNITY is in present existence at “the right hand of power.” It is there in the form or “fashion of a Man,” “justified by spirit,” and therefore spirit: and “made strong” as the Man of Yahweh's right hand, “whom He has made strong for Himself” (Phil. 2:7; 1 Tim. 3:16; John 3:6; Psa. 80:17).

This Spirit-Nucleus is the Lord Jesus Anointed, and by the anointing made what he is. He is the Eternal, by spirit manifested in Flesh, justified and glorified.

As the nucleus of the Rainbowed Unity, he is not now standing upon the sea and upon the earth; but is in a far country, whither he went many centuries ago to receive the kingdom, and afterwards to return (Luke 19:12). This return has been long expected and earnestly desired by his servants; but, as yet, their expectation has not been fulfilled. Nevertheless, at the time appointed, styled by Paul, “his own times,” the manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ will be shown by—

“The Blessed and Only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see” (1 Tim. 6:14-16).

This is the individual, personal, and simple nucleus of the Rainbowed Angelic Unity—omnipotence incorporate in one man—”the Man Christ Jesus”—the Spirit-Man, who says:

“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame” (Rev. 16:15).

But, where is he to come TO? Where will he first stand with his feet when he returns, having received power and authority to “revive his work in the midst of the years”? In what part of the globe, or spot of earth, will he take up his position, as the place where his saints shall be gathered to him, who “have made a covenant with him by sacrifice”?

Before replying to this inquiry, I remark, that different prophets in vision have seen him approaching Jerusalem at different stages of his course. One sees something in point that another did not see; but, by noting what they all saw, we are enabled to trace out his career till his “pillars of fire” stand upon the sea and upon the earth.

The blessing of Israel by Moses before his death is, unquestionably, a prophecy of their happy condition in the latter day, when dwelling in safety alone, and treading upon the high places of the earth (Deut. 33:28-29). The blessing upon Levi, Benjamin, and Joseph, is clearly indicative of this. Thus, of Levi, he said (v. 8)—

“Let Thy Thummim and Thy Urim be with the Man Thine Holy One, whom Thou didst prove at Massah.”

This, in relation to Levi, has never been yet fulfilled.

“And of Benjamin he said, The Beloved of Yahweh shall dwell in safety by Him” (v. 12).

This is yet future; for, when the Beloved of the Father dwelt in the canton of Benjamin, his habitation was unsafe, and his life in danger every day.

“And of Joseph he said, The ten thousands of Ephraim, and the thousands of Manasseh, shall push the peoples together to the ends of the earth” (vs. 13-17).

This yet remains to be fulfilled.

Now, in the preface of this prophetic blessing, it is written that Moses said:

“Yahweh came FROM Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints” (v. 2).

It was historically true that Yahweh came to Sinai; but is there nothing more in this than an historical allusion? Without other light than this affords, we could hardly answer the question with full satisfaction. We know that Israel's history is typical, and that the text is in connection with prophecy; still, “came” is so decidedly past time, that it causes one to pause before we affirm that it here predicts the future.

But the Spirit enlarges our conception somewhat on this point, in Psa. 68:17-18. Here it seems to indicate a future manifestation in the wilderness of Sinai and Paran—“The chariots of Elohim are twenty thousands, thousands repeated: the Lord (Adonai) among them, Sinai in the holy.”

Then follows, in v. 18, the prophecy of Christ's ascension, as Paul interprets it; after which in v. 22,

“The Lord saith, I will bring again from the depths of the sea.”

The English Version interjects—

“IS among them AS IN Sinai in the holy PLACE”

But Sinai bakkodesh is equivalent to “in Sinai the holy.” This conclusion is strengthened by v. 22, for how can—

“The Lord bring AGAIN from the depths of the sea.”

—unless he gather his people in the vicinity of the Red Sea?

But Habakkuk has made certain what—without his testimony—might be thought open to dispute. In the third chapter of his book, he prays that Yahweh would—

“Revive his work in the midst of the years; in the midst of the years make known, or manifest; and in wrath remember mercy.”

In response to this, he is favored with a vision, in describing which, he saith:

“Eloah (singular, not Elohim) came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth is full of his praise.”

If this testimony had been faithfully translated, there would have been no obscurity in it. The prophet did not write, “Eloah came from Teman.” The word rendered “came” is not bah, as in Deut. 33:2, where it is correctly translated, but yahoo, the future of the same verb, and therefore, to be rendered “shall come in.” The text should be rendered thus:

“Eloah shall come in from the South, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah.”

Eloah is the word used for the setter up of the kingdom, in Dan. 2:44. It signifies the Adorable One, or the Strong One. It is the Deity made flesh, and justified by spirit, and equivalent to “the Holy One”—Messiah.

I conclude, then, from this positive declaration of Habakkuk, that Moses spoke not historically but prophetically. The coming of Yahweh to Sinai in the days of Moses was representative, as to power, place, and purpose, of his coming in the latter day. Since Habakkuk wrote the words—

“Eloah shall come in from the South and the Holy One from mount Paran,”

—the prediction has not been fulfilled in any sense. If it had, “His glory would now cover the heavens, and the earth be filled with his praise,” which is very far from being the fact.

This, then, I believe is the place or country to which the personal Son of Man, “the Man Christ Jesus,” will come first at his approaching advent. The region is admirably adapted for the manifestation of omnipotence, in the judicial manifestation of the mystical Son of Man, or Rainbowed Angel.

The Peninsula of Sinai is the southern region which is reserved in solitude for a future display of great signs and wonders far transcending anything witnessed by Israel in the olden time. This peninsula is formed by two arms running into the land from the north end of the Red Sea, and is bounded by the one styled “the tongue of the Egyptian sea” (Isa. 11:15) on the southwest, at the end of which is Suez; and by the other, or Elanitic Gulf, called also the Gulf of Akaba, on the east. These waters form two divergent sides of a triangle, within the area of which are mounts Sinai and Paran, and a “waste howling wilderness,” containing nothing to be desired. Moses styles it (Deut. 8:15)-

“A great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water”

It is a dry, hot, sandy, mountainous region, that no government seeks to annex, and which no emigrants undertake to people. The few that are found within it are the descendants of Hagar—wild men, whose hand is against every man, and every man's hand against them (Gen. 16:12). The peninsula is filled up with mountains, and narrow valleys, and desolate plains. Of these mountains, the chain or elevated circle of Sinai is the chief.

The wilderness of Paran lies between the southern border of Palestine and the Mediterranean on the north; Egypt on the west; Idumea, or Edom, on the east.

“The Holy One,” says Habakkuk, writing in Jerusalem, “will come in from mount Paran.” By the help of Moses, we understand that he arrives at Paran “from Sinai,” which Habakkuk styles taiman, “the south.” Habakkuk had a vision of what was to be transacted in the country of the south, which will be left in the rear by an advance from mount Paran, after bringing affliction there on the tents of Cushan, and causing the curtains of Midian to tremble (3:7).

The reader is requested to note, that when Moses delivered his prophetic blessing upon the tribes of Israel, he was in the plains of Moab, and soon about to leave them. This was about a hundred miles north of mount Paran. When Israel heard the blessing, would they not desire to know, in view of Moses' speedy death, where help was to come from to establish the blessing? In reply to this, the answer is found in the oracle (Dent. 33:26-29)—

“There is none like the AIL of Yeshurun riding heavens in thy help, and clouds in his potence: the Elohim of olden time a refuge; and underneath the arms of olahm:

“And He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall command to destroy. Israel shall then dwell in safety alone . . . a people saved by Yahweh, the shield of thy help, and the sword of thy excellency!

“And thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places.”

But, though satisfied that Ail, or the omnipotence that had helped them through the Elohim hitherto, was their only help; yet, they were accustomed to the manifestation of divine power in specially appointed places; where, then, were they to look for him in his coming to help? Where would he “rise up to them,” when he should appear to destroy their enemies and cause them to dwell in safety alone?

The answer to this in Deut. 33:2, presupposes the accomplishment of the enterprise; because, although it is yet in the future, it is as certain to come to pass, as if it had already been fulfilled. For this reason, the future event is foretold in terms of the past; and we read,

“Yahweh came in from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he caused to shine forth from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of the peoples; all his saints are in thy hand.”

Moses speaks in this of an entrance from Sinai—a coming into the land from Sinai by way of Seir and Paran; not of a coming to Sinai. The word I have rendered “came in,” or entered, bah, “from Sinai,” is different from “came with ten thousands,” which is aithah. The word zahrach, “rose up,” signifies to “rise up as the sun,” hence the sun-rising in Seir, and the shining forth from Mount Paran.

This Mosaic vision is unquestionably identical with John's. The Ail of Yeshurun riding heavens and clouds, with a mandate of destruction in his right hand, is no other than the Rainbow Angel with the little scroll of fiery judgments in his hand; which, when executed, result in the deliverance of Israel, and the overthrow of all their enemies.

The south end of the Dead Sea is about a hundred and ten miles east of north from Akaba, at the north end of the gulf. Between these two points runs a valley, called towards the north El Ghor, and towards the south, El Araba, and forming a prolongation of the valley of the Jordan. There is a chain of mountains on the east of this great valley, forming the continuation of those which surround the eastern side of the Dead Sea. The portion of this chain eastward of El Araba is Mount SEIR—

“Yahweh rose up from Seir unto them.”

Near this are situated the ruins of Petra the ancient capital of Edom; and due north of these, and still in Idumea, and southeast of the Dead Sea, is BOZRAH, so noted in the prophecy of Isa. 63:1. Rising up from Seir with “his face as it were the sun,” he advances “in the greatness of his strength” to Bozrah, and thence still northward through the plains of Moab, to the vicinity of Nebo, where Moses died.

The upper region of Sinai forms an irregular circle of thirty or forty miles in diameter. From one of these peaks a view is commanded of some parts of the two gulfs of Akaba and Suez; also innumerable ranges of rocky mountains, but around the mount the open places are but few.

Such is the elevated platform upon which is to be inaugurated the Most High and Holy Heavenly—the ever-living Nave of Deity, containing the testimony, the bread of heaven, and the life—

“The glorious and fearful Name YAHWEH Elohaikha,” of Moses (Deut. 28:58);

The “YAH that rideth in the deserts,” of David (Psa. 68:4); The “King YAHWEH T'zvaoth,” of Isaiah (6:5);

The “four LIVING CREATURES with the likeness of a Man,” of Ezekiel (1:5, 12);

The “Man with the voice of a multitude,” of Daniel (10:5-6);

The “YAHWEH Elohim of hosts, Yahweh his memorial, of hosts (12:5);

The YAHWEH Givborim—the Yahweh-mighty ones” of Joel.

The “SAVIORS who come up on Mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau,” of Obadiah (v. 21);

The “MAN of Bethlehem Ephratah” with his companions, who delivers Israel from the Assyrian, and wastes Assyria with the sword, of Micah (5:2-6);

The “Eloah upon his horses and chariots of salvation, of Habakkuk 3:3,8);

The “four CHARIOT-SPIRITS of the heavens,” and the “one Yahweh and one Name,” of Zechariah (6:1, 5; 14:9);

The SON of MAN, the Lamb with seven horns and seven eyes, the rainbowed angel, and the hundred and forty four thousand, who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes, of John's Apocalypse—all the things signified by these divers forms of speech are essentially one and the same theophany, or God-Manifestation, simply expressed by the words—THE ETERNAL SPIRIT BY SPIRIT INCORPORATE IN JESUS AND HIS BRETHREN.

—*Bro. John Thomas*

Encouraging Words No. 19

NO prayerless person will attain to salvation. In the age to come even the Lord Jesus will have reached his peerless position as a result of prayer—
”When he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that

he feared.” Again, we read: “Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” Jesus did ask—humbly, fervently, frequently—and he will receive.

Some have stumbled at the idea that God should require prayer. These objectors have said: “If God knows what we want, and what is good for us, why should He require to be asked for it? When we open our Bibles, and ponder the subject, we can see many reasons why God should require us to pray. Prayer, scripturally offered, accords God His proper position as supreme Giver or Withholder, and places man in his proper position as suppliant and dependent. The result is that God is glorified, and the mind is exercised in that spirit of humility which is so well-pleasing to God. We shall realise this, if we consider the prayers of such approved ones as Abraham, David, Daniel. Another effect of prayer is that it keeps God in our remembrance. God soon fades from the minds of those who never pray. We do not want God to fade from our minds. We, like the Psalmist, want to remember both Him and His benefits. One of the greatest helps towards this will be to follow the apostolic injunction: “In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.” A further outcome of prayer is that it brings God near to us. We all know that God is afar off, but it is not so easy to realise that He is also near. Prayer will help us to appropriate and appreciate this great fact, even as did the Psalmist when he said: “The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.” A realisation of this led on the worthies of old to victory, and evoked also from the Lord Jesus the exclamation: “Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall give me more than twelve legions of angels?”

Then the conditions which are attached to acceptable prayer are such as to lead to self-examination and circumspection. It is a common idea with the world that man has only to pray, and God will smile. Those who are taught in the Word know that this is mere unwarrantable presumption. They recognise that “the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord,” and more so when brought with a double mind. The only prayer in which God delights is that of “the upright.” What an incentive, then, are God’s requirements in this matter of acceptable approach to Him, for us to put away all hypocrisy! What greater lever could we have, for instance, to be forgiving to those who injure us than the knowledge that unless we are so, it is vain to supplicate God’s forgiveness for our own shortcomings?

Again, our prayers reflect our minds in relation to the truth, “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” If the truth’s affairs occupy a large and proper place in our affections, we, like Epaphras, shall be found labouring fervently in our prayers for the truth’s well-being. If, however, self, flesh-gratification, is the aim of our supplications, we may be sure that

something is amiss. Let us see to it that our petitions run in lawful channels—channels that will tend to the glory of God and the salvation of man. If our children are rebellious and unbelieving, let it not be because we have failed to ask for wisdom and strength to guide them aright. If our ecclesia is at sixes and sevens, let it not be because faithful prayer for its unity and well-being has not been offered. How the strong, faithful Paul entreated for help in the form of prayers on his behalf! Do, brethren and sisters, in these dry, parched times stand less in need of such help? And ought not the same means to be adopted in order that it may be obtained? Sisters, let us “pray always and not faint.”

Sis. C.H. Jannaway—1908

Meditations – Deity’s Ways No. 18

GOD is kind to the unthankful and the worthless, and He calls upon us to be like Him (Luke 6:35). Obedience in this matter is a trial to the flesh, but then this is a day of trial. To refuse help to the needy on the ground of their unworthiness is not justifiable, unless that unworthiness take the form of positive laziness. “If a man will not work neither let him eat” (2 Thes. 3:10). To close the hand of charity against the needy for any other cause is wrong. To feed the idle is to foster and develop their sin, and this God forbids us to do. But there is always a difficulty in the fulfilling of our duty. An idler never admits his sin. He is invariably profuse with excuses—”I can’t get this” and “I can’t do that.” That difficulties would arise was not unknown to the author of the command. We are required as intelligent beings to weigh and consider and to judge righteously. If there be a doubt, then we should give the one in question the benefit of the doubt. We may rest assured that God will not long allow those who are seeking to do His will to be imposed upon. The character of an idler is sure to manifest itself in time. We need never guess or act precipitately. Better to indefinitely postpone a refusal to assist than to err upon the wrong side.

Paul besought the Corinthian believers to be “perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Epis. 1:10). If unity of mind and judgment was good for the church at Corinth, it is good for that at Birmingham, or London, or elsewhere. How is this unity to be secured? By an attentive and faithful ear to the voice of God. This will unite us in faith and supply us with principles for harmonious action. Difference of judgment frequently arises from a non-recognition of Scripture principles, hence the necessity for thorough and honest investigation concerning everything we take in hand. Let us seek peace, eschewing strife and all that leads to it. Where no principle is involved let us be yielding to the wishes of others. We are living in an age when there is a manifest disinclination to heed the

apostolic admonition. There is a tendency to seek to be different for the sake of being different—to refrain from adopting a particular course, wise though it be, because others have adopted it. This attitude is to be deplored. It leads to evil. It tends to disunion. Unity is strength, and this we sorely want. We are few and weak and our enemies are many and strong. Let us endeavour to knit ourselves together as much as possible not only in faith but in action. In an ecclesia where Paul is observed, “decency” and “order” prevail. The decisions of the majority are respected and upheld—not rebelled against.

God’s children are unquestionably poor—poor in means, in position, and especially in what the world calls education and culture, but this need not distress them. It is more their good fortune than their misfortune to be thus circumstanced. Let them remember the words of Paul, “Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.” Also the words of Christ, “Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.” Truly has God richly comforted his children in their poverty. What they lack now, His word tells them, they will have in abundance by and bye. Just a little while and then that day of indescribable perfection. Solomon excelled in wisdom, wealth, and lustre, but the saints will far outshine him. They are to be made like Jesus! What unfathomable glory! But until he appear it is their duty to “quietly wait”—not to envy the rich, nor to strive to attain to their wealth, their position, their influence, nor their scholarly acquirements. “Better is it to be of a lowly spirit with the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud.” Yes, the poor, “rich in faith,” are those whom God has an interest in and a love for. This interest and love will be openly and palpably visible when Mary’s prophecy is fulfilled—“He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away.”

It is Christ’s will that we should regularly—on the first day of the week—gather together to break bread and drink wine in remembrance of him (1 Cor. 11:2, 25, 29; 16:2). New Testament history tells us that many of our first century brethren were faithful in this matter—they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42; 20:7). It likewise tells us that some were disobedient—forsaking the assembling of themselves together (Heb. 10:25). Let us ever emulate the first and shun the second of these examples. To forsake, for trivial reasons, the meeting for breaking of bread is undoubtedly a step in the wrong direction. This is evinced both by Scripture and experience. Christ is the author of the institution, hence it must be based upon consummate wisdom. When the inclination to absent ourselves from the meeting arises, let us think of Christ’s statement—“If any man love me he will keep my words.” The ability to partake of the memorial feast

intelligently and scripturally is a blessed privilege. Let us never partake of it as a mere formal observance. Such service is unacceptable and highly displeasing to God. The Jews are a solemn warning to us in this respect. Let us hear the denunciation against them—“Your appointed feasts my soul hateth” (Is. 1:14). If we would please God, we must be obedient not only in letter, but in spirit. We must, with pure hearts, thoughtfully and appreciatively remember Christ.

Bro. A. T. Jannaway—1888

Analecta Apocalypticae (59)

Post-Millennial Revolt, Resurrection and Judgment

We have been engaged in the contemplation of a variety of extraordinary scenes, witnessed in vision by the apostle John in the isle of Patmos, 1,800 years ago — scenes that were not shown to him for his personal benefit only, but for a certain class, contemporary with himself, and who should come after him, described as “the servants of God.” The benefit proposed was one of knowledge. The vision was communicated “to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass.” This is the opening intimation of the whole book (verse 1). From this it follows that the book is prophetic in character, and that it is a duty and a privilege on the part of those who may conceive they are the servants of God, to make themselves acquainted with its contents. It is a difficulty in the way, that the information communicated in it is presented in symbolic form; but it is a difficulty surmountable when the key is obtained, in the understanding of the literal system of knowledge conveyed in the plainer writings of the prophets and apostles. This system of knowledge is entirely concealed from view by the established theology of the day, with the result that the Apocalypse is utterly unintelligible to the vast mass of professing Christians. To those we all belonged once, and can speak from experience on the point. Recently — in some cases not very recently — we have had a happier experience. Our eyes have been opened to see the unscriptural character of current theology, and to apprehend the beautiful system of Bible truth expressed in the apostolic phrase, “the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.” As a collateral result, the agency that has put us in possession of this precious knowledge has also opened to us the significance of the last book of the Bible, which, in former days without meaning or use, has now become a consoling beacon light in the moral and political confusion at present prevailing on the earth.

Unlocking the hieroglyphs, in no empirical manner, but by the rational employment of the keys contained in the book itself, in conjunction with the keys procurable in the other departments of Scripture, we have been enabled to recognize in the successive scenes of the Apocalypse the prophetic foreshadowings of the leading features of European experience during the last eighteen centuries. We have been able to determine the position of our own particular day in the complicated but not entangled programme, nearly concluded. We have looked at the nearly-reached “end of the matter,” which furnishes the reason of the whole — the transformation

of the system of the world from a variety and a contrariety of bad mortal governments, to a single universal theocracy in the hands of an order of immortal rulers — Jesus and his brethren. To this point the vision conducted us last Thursday evening in chapter 20. To-night we look at the closing scenes, which are gorgeous scenes. But before the perfect gorgeousness there is a momentary cloud.

Chapter 20, verse 7: “When the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.” It seems strange at first sight that a divine reign of a thousand years duration should end in this manner. Fancy would suggest that the power and purity and beneficence of the government of Christ and his brethren would have so affected mankind everywhere for good that it would be morally impossible for a rebellion to be conceived, still more, that it should enlist the sympathy and support of nations and multitudes. That such a result should be foretold is one of a thousand evidences of the divine character of the Scriptures. Imagination would have drawn a very different picture. We should have had human nature, basking in the sunshine of divine government, represented as rising in the majesty of an unsullied and ever-soaring progress, towards the perfection of which the germ is supposed by every human philosophy to exist in every human breast, and which only requires the necessary conditions to ripen into a gorgeous flower. Instead of that, we have the whole world in arms against a government that will have blessed them with a thousand years of justice, righteousness, beneficence, plenty, and peace. How is it to be explained? The explanation is furnished in the opening sentences of the verses we have just read. “Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.” You recollect who Satan is — not the fiction of a Romanized and Paganized theology — not the immortal devil of pulpit discourse, who has no existence, except in the light literature and lighter talk of the people. Satan (a Hebrew word, signifying adversary) is the name applied to the dragon, and the dragon we have indisputably identified as the heraldic symbol of human hostility to God, officially incorporate in the kings and governments in which it is headed up. The seizing and binding of this dragon is the subjugation and suppression of the governments that oppose Christ at his coming, and the establishment of an iron rule throughout the earth, which effectually prevents their resuscitation. What can the unloosing be but the removal of those repressions and restraints which keep rebellion down for a thousand years? It is a matter of no importance to know the particular way which these restraints will be removed. A suspension of acts of rigour on the part of the saints in their several stations throughout the world, such as letting disobedience go unpunished and unnoticed, and allowing assemblies for political discussion, would be enough to give the native wilfulness of human nature scope for revival, especially if, as is possible, the saints were everywhere withdrawn to the imperial centre at Jerusalem. The men of that generation will know nothing experimentally of the evils of human government. They will have known nothing but the order and prosperity and

peace of the rule of the saints, accustomed to which, they will probably lose all perception of the connection between that rule and the blessedness of the age. They will suppose the blessedness a matter of course — a something that would be enjoyed under any government strong enough to take the reins of power. They may get tired of these being in the hands of one class all the time. They will know that a thousand years previously, self-government was a power exercised by mankind in various forms all the world over. They may begin to question the right of any power to set this “natural birthright” aside. Human longevity will be common in those days, and therefore the immortality of the rulers will be a matter of faith with the subject populations. Doubt may at last come to be cast upon it. There will be much specious sophistry employed, we may be sure, before the nations surrender themselves to the leadership of Satan let loose. Stirring orations, self-important conferences of delegates, the circulation of eloquent documents, will doubtless enter largely into the machinery of seduction. At last the poison takes effect. The people lend themselves to the Demagogues: they listen to the flattering doctrines to which they have been unaccustomed for centuries. They subscribe to the movement. They enroll themselves in the battalions: secret drillings go on everywhere. As government takes no notice, the drillings lose their secrecy. The people take courage. The movement becomes an open one. From certain centres it spreads, until it commands the adhesion of entire communities; and, lastly, of nations. It finally attains the proportions and power of an international armament. The armies take the field. An expedition against headquarters — “the camp of the saints, the beloved city” — is projected. Christ, who could nip the whole conspiracy in the bud with a single act of power, allows the rebels a clear field and no favour. They come up in their unchallenged hosts “on the breadth of the earth.” They arrive on the confines of the Holy Land, with which their annual journeys have made them familiar. They carry all before them. Flushed with complete success, they come within sight of the Holy City itself. This is the “hitherto-and-no-farther” of their Korah-Dathan-and-Abiram enterprise. While they are contemplating measures of siege, the devouring fire and crashing artillery of heaven burst suddenly upon their affrighted eyes and ears. The scenes of the pre-millennial Armageddon are re-enacted on an enlarged scale. The earth opens her terrific jaws to receive the stunned and blaspheming multitudes, who are engulfed in a catastrophe that wipes the last trace of rebellion from the history of the earth. “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet (here there is an ellipsis in the original. It is supplied in the common version by the word “are;” but as the allusion is historic, — pointing to what happened at the beginning of the thousand years, it seems more rational to make the ellipsis historic, and to read, instead of “where the beast and false prophet are”, “ where the beast and false prophet were cast,” intimating that the fate that consumed the leaders of the Armageddon pre-millennial war now befalls those of the post-millennial insurrection) — and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” This is the symbolic intimation of the fact that the divine affliction that overtakes the official heads and leaders of the post-millennial revolt against the camp of the saints will prevail over them without remedy. Sodom and Gomorrha are pointed to as examples of what we are to understand by a scriptural “suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude, verse 7). The fire of

God's judgment consumed them without remedy, (Lam. 4:6). The leaders of post-millennial diabolism will be secured, and made the subjects of a formal and awful consignment to their well-merited fate.

It will be found a pleasant exercise to consider how appropriate a finish to the history of sin upon earth is this great appointed post-millennial revolt of nations. Sin is allowed the opportunity of coming to a great head, so to speak. It gathers up its power, comes into the presence of its destroyer, provokes mortal combat, and is finished at one terrible blow. There is a dramatic completeness about such an arrangement, which is in harmony with the beautiful wisdom that is manifest in all the works of God.

It involves certain details which will readily occur to us. While all the world is nationally implicated in this rebellion, there will, of course, be thousands, nay, millions, who take no part in it. We are not told in so many words, but it follows from certain things testified. For example, the saints accepted and glorified at the coming of Christ are styled "the firstfruits" (Rev. 14:4). This designation is borrowed from the Mosaic shadow of these "good things to come." Israel were required to offer the first ripe fruits of the field in thanksgiving and joy before God: this was afterwards followed by the full harvest, when there was again a feast of gladness coinciding with the feast of tabernacles. These Mosaic arrangements were of divine appointment and foreshadowed the ultimate purpose of Jehovah in Christ. Now as the glorification of "the ecclesia of the firstborn" at the return of Christ, is the antitype of the "first fruits," there must be a counterpart to the feast of ingathering. There must be a great harvest of human life to glory, honour, and immortality at the close of a thousand years. What else could come of an age when "the glory of the Lord" prevails on the earth like the spread of the mighty ocean in its bed? It is testified that the reign of Christ is to this end — that he put all enemies under his feet (1 Cor. 15:25). And "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (verse 26). It consequently follows that at the close of his reign, there will be a vast multitude who have learnt to walk in Jehovah's ways (Isa. 2:3), from whom the veil and the darkness of these gloomy times will have been removed, with the effect of making them turn to Jehovah with a fervent and joyful faith and obedience (Isa. 25:7), in readiness for investiture with the glorious attribute of immortality. These will not be found in the rebellious ranks of the Satanic multitude. Their refusal to join them may bring upon them evil consequences permitted as a closing proof of their obedience. The unchecked success of the revolt up to a certain point, which may involve the preparation of years, will certainly be a sore trial to the mortal faithful. But the end will justify their refusal to be compromised. The sudden destruction of the presumptuous host will be followed by the recognition, praise and immortalization of the faithful multitude everywhere, who have stood aloof from the popular conspiracy against the Lord's anointed.

But will there be no dead waiting to stand in the same category of approbation? Will death have made no havoc in the populations under the reign of Christ and the saints? This question is answered (supposing there were no other answer), by the statement that "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." If death is the last enemy to be destroyed, it follows that death is not destroyed until after the destruction of the Gog and Magog multitude of the post-millennial revolt. Consequently death is at work up to

that point, though greatly weakened in its power like every other evil at that time when the blessing of Israel's God sheds a healing beneficence on land and ocean. There is direct evidence of the soundness of this conclusion in the directions given to the mortal Levitical priests of that age, to "come at no dead person to defile themselves" (Ezek. 44:25), and in the permission to them to "take for their wives a widow ... that had a priest before" (verse 22); likewise in the statement of Isaiah that "the child shall die an hundred years old" (Isa. 65:20), that is, a man dying at a hundred years old will in those days be considered a child. Human life will be much prolonged. Still, death reigns till abolished at the crisis brought on at the end of the thousand years by the revolt of the nations.

Now the aggregate of those who die during the reign of Christ must be very great, and as these will be times of great light, they will be times of great responsibility. Consequently when at the suppression of the post-millennial revolt, the time arrives for the great antitypical harvest into life eternal, something like a general resurrection must take place, differing very much in its extent from that which takes place at the pre-millennial coming of Christ, on account of the great difference in the dispensation preceding it. This seems to be the teaching of the scene next described by John: "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to his works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

The import of the leading features of this scene must be evident enough. A great white throne — the symbol of righteousness in judgment: the occupant of it, the Mighty One before whose face the whole fabric reared by the post-millennial politicians had crumbled into nothing; the dead, those who had died but were now raised; the opened books, symbols of the law by which they will be judged; the book of life, the divine record (preserved on something more enduring than parchment) of those who are chosen for life eternal because of obedience; the casting of death and hell into the lake of fire, the obliteration of death and the grave from the earth by the giving over to the destroying judgment of God of all who are divinely decreed worthy of death, leaving in the land of the living those only who by the same prerogative are adjudged worthy of the unspeakable gift of immortality.

When this mighty result has been reached, a new state of things upon the earth must result from the altered conditions. Till then sin and death will always more or less have prevailed, necessitating arrangements and institutions suitable thereto. But now, the population will be without exception immortal, and socially and racially fused into ONE, as the result of assimilation to a common perfection of nature and harmony with God. What must come out of such a change but the alteration of constitution symbolically described in the next succeeding words of John (chap. 21:1-4): "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first

earth had passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away”.

This seems to be the consummation alluded to by Paul, when he speaks of Christ at the end “delivering-up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all authority and power ... when all things (including the last enemy, death — see verse 26) shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto Him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all” (1 Cor. 15:24 - 28). It is manifest that the full accomplishment, at the end of the thousand years, of the work of Christ who came to “take away the sin of the world”, and therefore death, the effect of it, will require a change in the constitution of things. There has been a gradual change since the beginning. The introduction of sin caused a breach between man and his Creator, whose benevolence and wisdom proposed a healing of the breach by gradual measures which should bring more glory and joy at the last than if no breach had taken place. These measures began with worship at a distance — outside of Eden — through the medium of sacrifice. The next stage brought a whole nation close to God as His chosen people, under an arrangement, however, which was but “a shadow” of the final form of the proposed goodness; for “the law (of Moses) was a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image thereof” (Heb. 10:1). The next stage introduces Jesus and offers him to the world as the medium of approach on the part of a few among mankind who should respond to the invitation to “come out from among them”, and in the midst of the surrounding alienation, to become “sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty.” The next stage shows this class glorified with Christ, at the restoration of the kingdom again to Israel at the return of Christ, and the subjection of all nations to the sceptre of the house of David in his most righteous hands. In this stage of the plan, his accepted brethren rule all the world for a thousand years as “kings and priests” for the purpose of bringing the world to God. All nations are brought into a worshipping relation to God, but still it is worship at a distance, so to speak. They are a mixed multitude with godliness in the ascendant, but still with an element of the constitutional diabolism of human nature not altogether latent. They use sacrifice and they approach God through the millennial priesthood. A thousand years of this arrangement provides from amongst the nations a sufficient population of enlightened and obedient members of the human family to occupy the earth as its immortal, joyous, and God-glorifying inhabitants. These by resurrection and transformation are glorified, and the remnant destroyed. Sin and death have disappeared. What need then for priesthood? What need for the institution of a kingdom, designed, with iron rod, to keep the world in subjection, and the nations in the way of light and life? Manifestly, there must needs be a change. The nature of the change in its details we cannot know. We should need experience of the Spirit-nature to understand. Suffice it to note that the Father is no longer in the background: “the Son

himself is subject.” God himself is “with men” and “their God”: and there is a cessation of every evil and every curse: “no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.” In this state of things, Jesus and his brethren will always occupy the highest rank of the firstborn; but they and earth’s entire population are all one, and worship God without mediation. This is the promised “New heaven and new earth”, not literal heavens and literal earth: for these have been from of old and shall be for ever (Psa. 78:69; Jer. 31:35-36; Psa. 89:36-37); but new heavens and new earth in the figurative sense of a new system of things — a sense constantly exemplified in the writings of the prophets (Isa. 13:10-19; Jer. 4:23-28; Isa. 65:17-19). The making of these “new heavens and new earth” begins at the commencement of the thousand years in “planting the heavens and laying the foundations of the earth” (Isa. 51:16). But they are not seen in their finished form till the consummation depicted in the chapter we are considering. When they are finished, there is “no more sea” — no more sea in the apocalyptic sense. This sense is defined in chap. 17:15: “The waters which thou sawest where the whore sitteth, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.” When the end of the thousand years is reached, these will have ceased to be. The world will be one race and one family—and that, a new race, an immortal race—the last Adam in, multitude — as the heir of the first Adam in multitude who will then have passed away. This last Adam multitude being in Christ are all the seed of Abraham, as Paul says, “If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed.” Being Abraham’s seed, they are Israel. Consequently, in their sole occupation of the earth when “the former things shall have passed away,” there will be a fulfilment of what God says by Jeremiah concerning the House of Israel: “Though I make a full end of all nations among whom I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee” (Jer. 30:11). Abraham will also see in its fullest sense the meaning of the promise made to him, “I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore” (Gen. 22:17).

“And he that sat on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write; for these words are true and faithful.” This is the glorious hope of the gospel. The old groaning earth is to be renewed and revived by the removal of every curse in the day of Christ’s completed triumph. This pledge of God is the true and only enlightened form of the musty tradition of all ages, that there is a good time coming. There is no hope of a good time except in the way God has planned and promised. Science and literature are all very well in their place: they can do nothing to remove the inherent abortiveness of the present constitution of things. God will do this in the way He has revealed; and He here invites to a participation in the coming feast of life and gladness (verses 6-7): “I will give unto him that is athirst of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.” Another class is mentioned by way of warning (verse 8): “The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death”

Berean 2011-107

Arranged from the writings of Bro. Robert Roberts by Bro. Bob Widding

Hints For Bible Markers

The first verse quoted is an extremely interesting command. To help our understanding we must know the meaning of the word virtue. It is not in the sense that is current in our day. Parkhurst says it denotes strength and courage. This is a very fitting concept to put in place with the rest of this verse. It is a normal thing for us to develop in the direction of our thoughts. When we put our minds wholly on the idea of business, it grows. When our minds are centered on athletics we become knowledgeable and good at them. If our minds are looking toward entertainment we will embrace all the latest stars and fads. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matthew 6:21) We grow in the vein of what we associate with.

Our minds grow in the direction of the thoughts they cultivate. It takes strength and courage to develop a mind that is ready, willing, and able to think on these things which are so praiseworthy. Paul has opened the door of excellence so wide we should never lack understanding of which of the two choices, foolishness of man or glorification of God, that are before us, to make. We are to be constantly thinking on things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report.

Our salvation depends upon compliance with this apostolic rule. "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." (2 Peter 1:8-9) "Living sacrifices," is the apostolic description of those who seek to successfully obey and serve Jesus.

We are to hold fast to that which is good and run away from that which is evil. "hold fast that which is good." (1Thessalonians 5:21) All who wish to gain immortality are to have an abhorrence of evil and be prejudiced against all things carnal. "LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart." (Psalms 15:1-2) It would take a small book to define all the qualities that those professing the name of Christ are to manifest to the world. But it is described simply in these commands, provided we "think on these things," setting them in our hearts and minds as treasures of great price. Think about what it means to abstain from ALL APPEARANCE OF EVIL. Not just, "don't do it" but to the point of "don't even appear as if you are doing anything evil." If we are to appear in "white raiment" at the judgment seat we must allow the commands of Christ to operate in our hearts and minds continually, so that we develop a like minded attitude and character. We must make doing Christ's commands such that they are done without thought, as if by second nature. *Bro. Beryl V. Snyder*

The Commandments of Christ

As collected and organized by Bro. Roberts

V. CONCERNING YOUR OWN CHARACTER

Follow after whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseful;

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. (Philippians 4:8)

Abhor evil, and abstain from its appearance.

Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. (Romans 12:9)

Abstain from all appearance of evil. (1 Thessalonians 5:22)

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